

12 Great Hand Coordination Exercises with Chords

Exercises



Chord Progressions

Use these chord progressions throughout the lessons to work on different chords with the various hand coordination exercises.

Chord Progressions

Choose a song you know and that you've played before.

As you play it, add in more notes of the chord you're playing - it can be one, all, some, solid or broken.

Key of C:

C Am F G

Key of G:

G D Em C

Key of F:

F Bb Dm C

Key of A:

A F#m D E

Key of Bb:

Bb Gm Eb F

Lesson 1: The Basics

Hand Coordination with Chords

Exercise 1

Step 1:

To start, we'll play a single repeated note in the left hand. In the right hand, we'll play a chord on beats 1 and 3 (when counting to 4).

Chord progression:

C G Am F

Step 2:

We'll play a single repeated note in the left hand. In the right hand, we'll play a chord on beats 1 and 4 (when counting to 4).

Step 3:

With your left hand playing the repeated notes, play the right hand chord on beats 1 and 3 and then beats 1 and 4. Do this twice for each chord and then move to the next chord. You can give yourself 4 beats of silence to get to the next chord if you need that time or go straight there if you don't.

Step 4:

Do this entire pattern switching what you're doing in each hand.

Play repeated notes in the right hand and the chords in the left hand on beats 1 and 3, then 1 and 4. Then go to the next chord.

Exercise 2

Step 1:

Play a single repeated note in the left hand. In the right hand, we'll play a chord on beats 2 and 4 (when counting to 4).

Chord progression:

C G Am F

Step 2:

We'll play a single repeated note in the left hand. In the right hand, we'll play a chord on beats 2, 3 and 4 (when counting to 4).

Step 3:

With your left hand playing the repeated notes, play the right hand chord on beats 2 and 4 and then beats 2, 3 and 4. Do this twice for each chord and then move to the next chord. You can give yourself 4 beats of silence to get to the next chord if you need that time or go straight there if you don't.

Step 4:

Do this entire pattern switching hands.

Play repeated notes in the right hand and the chords in the left hand on beats 2 and 4, then 2, 3 and 4. Then go to the next chord.

Lesson 2: Coordinating Broken Chords, Inversions & Arpeggios

Exercise 1

Right hand holds the chord for 4 beats.

Left hand plays the same chord broken - one note at a time. Then rest for 1 beat.

Do this twice for each chord.

For example, the right hand plays the C chord solid (all notes at the same time) and the left hand plays the C chord one note at a time - C E G rest. Repeat this once. Then move on to the next chord in the progression.

Chord progression:

C Dm Em F G C

Switch hands to play the broken chords in the right hand and solid chord in the left hand.

Exercise 2

Play the "easy arpeggio" in one hand. The easy arpeggio is leaving out the middle note of the chord and just playing the edges with the root note again at the top. For example, for the C chord, we're playing C G C (going up).

Left hand plays: easy arpeggio - like C G C C for the C chord. This is going up and just repeat that last note. (Dm would be D A D D.)

Right hand plays: solid chord for 4 beats or on beats 1 and 4.

Use the same chord progression above:

C Dm Em F G C

Then switch. Easy arpeggio in right hand and solid chord in left hand with the chord progression.

Fingering for easy arpeggio:

Left hand: 5 2 1

Right hand: 1 3 5. 1 2 5 is also okay if that's more comfortable.

Exercise 3

Use the easy arpeggio pattern and add in an inversion.

Left hand: play the easy arpeggio just like exercise 2. For example, C chord will play C G C C.

Right hand: play the chord (like C) in root position (C E G) then in first inversion (E G C). Hold each for 2 beats. So when the left hand plays the last 2 notes (ex. C C), the right hand is playing the chord in first inversion.

Then switch hands so that the right hand is playing the easy arpeggio and the left hand is playing the inversion.

Chord progression:

C Dm Em F G C

Take this one slow to start.

Fingering for first inversion:

Right hand: 1 2 5

Left hand: 5 3 1

Lesson 3: Coordinating Moving Notes



Exercise 1

Left hand: play a repeated note 8 times. (Option: you can play a chord here instead.) Example, C.

Right hand: play a 5 note scale starting on the same note you're playing in your left hand. Listen to the timing of this from the video. We're playing this twice. For example, the starting note is C so we're playing C D E F G (rest) C D E F G (rest rest).

Key: C. We're not playing any black notes.

Pattern / Chord Progression

You can use either the chord or just the note as your starting point for both hands here.

C G A (Am) F

Then switch hands and do the pattern in the other hand.

Lesson 4: Coordinating 4 Note Chords

Exercise: Simple Version

Right hand: play the 4 note chord broken. For example, C chord would be the notes (going up) C E G C (going down) G E.

Count to 6, each right hand note getting 1 beat. Play this broken chord 3 times and end on root note of the chord (like C for a C chord), holding it for 6 beats.

Left hand: play the root note following this pattern: hold for 6 beats, hold for 6 beats, hold for 3 beats, hold for 3 beats, hold for 6 beats.

Then switch hands playing the broken chord in the left hand and the note in the right hand.

Chord Progression:

C G Am F

Exercise: Harder Version

To make the exercise slightly harder, play the full 3 note chord in one hand and the broken 4 note chords in the other hand.

Right hand: play the 4 note chord broken. For example, C chord would be the notes (going up) C E G C (going down) G E.

Count to 6, each right hand note getting 1 beat. Play this broken chord 3 times and end on root note of the chord (like C for a C chord), holding it for 6 beats.

Left hand: play the chord following this pattern: hold for 6 beats, hold for 6 beats, hold for 3 beats, hold for 3 beats, hold for 6 beats.

Then switch hands playing the broken chord in the left hand and the solid chord in the right hand.

Chord Progression:

C G Am F

Note: you can do this exercise with any of the chord progression.

Lesson 5: Coordinating Solid & Broken Chords Together



Exercise

Chord progression:

G D Em C

Left hand: play a chord broken 4 times (counting to 6 twice). Then move to the next chord in the progression.

Right hand: there are a few options:

Option 1: play the root note of the chord. Play every 3 beats (on counts 1 and 4).

Option 2: play the chord on beats 1 and 4.

Option 3: play the root note or chord on beats 1, 3, 4, and 6.

Then switch hands!

You can do this rhythm with any of the chord progressions from the chord progression sheet.

Lesson 6: Coordinating Complex Chords



Exercise 1

Right hand: play the chord broken then solid. For example, Am7 will be (going up) A C E G (going down) E C - A (for 3 beats), then the solid chord for 3 beats.

Left hand: hold the root note of the chord for 6 beats, then play it again for 3 beats, then the whole chord for 3 beats.

Then move to the next chord.

Play through all the chord progressions this way. Then switch what the hands are playing around so the left hand is playing the broken chord.

Fingering for these chords:

Right hand: 1 2 4 5

Left hand: 5 4 2 1

Chord Progressions:

Chord Progression 1

Am7 Dm7 F6 E7

Chord Progression 2

Gm7 Cm7 Eb6 D7

Chord Progression 3

Em7 Bm7 C6 B7

Chord Cheat Sheet:

Am7 = A C E G

Dm7 = D F A C

F6 = F A C D

E7 = E G# B D

Gm7 = G Bb D F

Cm7 = C Eb G Bb

Eb6 = Eb G Bb C

D7 = D F# A C

Em7 = E G B D

Bm7 = B D F# A

C6 = C E G A

B7 = B D# F# A

Lesson 7: Chord & Improv Coordination Challenge



Exercise

Left hand: plays the "easy arpeggio" or outside edges of the chord. For example, the F chord is F C F (we leave out the A from the chord). Play this on beats 1, 2 and 3.

Right hand: make something up for beats 4, 5 and 6.

Key: C, so only play on the white notes.

Tips: play a note from the chord on the stronger beats (beat 4 is a stronger beat in 6/8 time). This tends to sound pretty good.

Chord progression:

C Am F G

Also try this in a few other keys.

Key: G, has F#.

Chord progression in G:

G D Em C

Key: F, has Bb.

Chord progression in F:

F Bb Dm C